Status. The Yellow Tit may never have been common in Taiwan. Today it is a rare resident. It appears to be more numerous in the southern half of the island than in the northern half, and in the western half of the mountains than the eastern half.

Their scarcity appears to be partly related to the scarcity of their preferred habitat, the primary hardwood forests which are disappearing under forestry practices (Schultz 1970). The Yellow Tit is one of several passerines in Taiwan whose future may depend on the preservation of tracts of virgin hardwood forests.

The endemic Yellow Tit may also be facing competition from its sympatric and more numerous congener the Green-backed Tit. These 2 species are ecologically and behaviourally similar, and they may compete for both food and nest sites. The Green-backed Tit appears to be less specialized than the Yellow Tit and may, therefore, have a competitive advantage.

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Black Kites *Milvus migrans* in Sumatra

by D. R. Wells

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Black Kites *Milvus migrans,* assumed to be of exclusively northern origin, now winter annually in the Malay Peninsula though numbers decline sharply south at least of 8° N. From field sightings Medway & Wells (1976) were able to provide slight evidence that occasional migrants cross to Indonesia. At the time we were unaware of a definite record but going over long-stored notes I find that on 13 and 14 April 1961 I saw single *M. migrans* (possibly the same individual) feeding with Brahminy Kites *Haliastur indus* at the mouth

of the Belawan river, northeast Sumatra (03° 45′ N, 98° 40′ E). They were larger than *Haliastur* with proportionately longer and shallow furcated tail, blackish brown with pale mottling on the head, venter and lower wing-coverts, and with a prominent white basal patch on the underside of the primaries.

Though overlooked by all recent authors, Medway & Wells included, the British Museum (Natural History) possesses a nineteenth century specimen (reg. no. 87.1.11.556) marked Sumatra. From label data I have assumed it to be the skin referred to *M. govinda* by Wardlaw Ramsay (1880) in a review of Sumatran material sent to the Marquis of Tweeddale by the Swedish explorer Carl Bock. It is an unsexed immature and on wing-length (456 mm maximum chord) falls actually within the zone of overlap of this northern tropical subspecies *M. m. govinda* with the eastern Palaearctic *M. m. lineatus* (Brown & Amadon 1968). The width of its pale ventral streaks, typically narrow in *govinda*, is also intermediate but a large white patch on the primaries like that of the Belawan bird(s) is suggestive of *lineatus*. Date and locality are not recorded, but according to Wardlaw Ramsay, Bock made his collection between August 1878 and January 1879 in the Padang region of western Sumatra. Bock (1882) himself mentions *M. govinda* in an appendix entitled 'List of birds collected in the highlands of the West Coast of Sumatra'. This appendix admittedly includes one or two normally lowland species, but Padang town, Bock's point of entry into West Coast province, is on its narrow coastal plain and he very probably took a few birds during journeys to or from the interior. It is reasonable therefore to accept this specimen as extending the known range of northern Black Kites in the Sunda region south to the equator.

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The genus *Criniger* (Pycnonotidae) in Africa

by G. D. Field

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The bearded bulbuls *Criniger* of the forests of west and equatorial Africa cause some difficulty to the taxonomist. There are 3 certain species: *olivaceus*, ranging from Sierra Leone to Ghana; *barbatus*, from Sierra Leone to the eastern Congo; and *calurus* from Guinea Bissau to Uganda. In the west there is no problem: *olivaceus* has a bright yellow throat and olive underparts, *barbatus* a pale yellow throat, greyish underparts, *calurus* a white throat and yellow underparts. In the east complications arise: the forms of *barbatus* from